

## BOOKS OF THE WEEK SEEN IN REVIEW AND COMMENT

CRITICAL REVIEWS  
OF THE SEASON'S  
LATEST BOOKSFiction Woven Around Cesare Borgia, Modern  
Labor Troubles and Other Themes.A Biography of the Jolly Duchess of St. Albans—Ap-  
preciation of a Noted Priest-Poet.History, Astronomy, Descriptive Travel, Greek Art,  
Flower Arrangement and Other Subjects.

No attempt to whitewash Cesare Borgia is made by Rafael Sabatini in "The Banner of the Bull" (J. B. Lippincott Company), but he succeeds, if not in making a case for him, at least in presenting brilliantly some of the qualities that excited the admiration of Machiavelli when he wrote "The Prince." The three episodes which Mr. Sabatini relates are connected with one another by little more than Cesare's presence; all serve to display his amazing intelligence and subtlety and his power of command to modern ideas of honor or humanity. In the second story, where a girl shares her wits against Borgia's and shows her ruthlessness, the reader very likely may feel less aversion to his conduct than to hers, though he will be pleased at his discomfiture. The author paints his characters with grim humor and with something of the relish of the Italian story tellers for the triumph of real subtlety over coarser machinations. He shows that he shares Machiavelli's belief that Borgia had the making of a great man in him in spite of his iniquities and he takes occasion to show the source of the more vulgar accusations against the Borgia family. The undoing of his complacent schemers is very amusing if the reader can stand the rough justice of a century that made little of the life of the suffering of the weak. It is an artistic piece of work, a reproduction of sixteenth century ideas in a form which the more squeamish twentieth century may perhaps apprehend.

A discussion of labor troubles to-day rather than a story is what Richard Aumerle Maher offers in "The Heart of a Man" (Benziger Brothers, New York), which is the more to be regretted because the portrait of the wide-eyed priest is very lifelike and conditions in a one factory town are pictured faithfully. The long and arduous arguments of the priests over socialism and labor conditions, while they may make clear what the views of intelligent Catholics are in these matters, distract the mind from the story. This tells of the conflict between the reckless, but capable, capitalist who owns the mills and the equally capable and violent labor leader opposed to him, who is held in check by his religion. The scenes are vivid enough, but the men are too palpably caricatures of ideas and principles. The old priest, on the contrary, is human above all.

It is a very charming and poetical picture Anne Preston draws in "The Glory and the Dream" (B. W. Huebsch, New York) of an imaginative little Irish boy and his playmates, real and fictitious, first in Ireland and then in the America to which his father migrates. His companions are a matter of fact small boy and a somewhat more responsive little girl; to them he introduces the creatures of his fancy. After a time he becomes the master of a dog and the rehabilitation of the dog's character becomes a matter of serious import. There are delightful and natural people in the tale, which grownup readers will understand and enjoy more than children.

There is much needless suffering in Christine Faber's "The Burden of Honor" (P. J. Kennedy and Sons, New York) and lying women are allowed to have their way in a manner that will seem strange to plain people. The heroine gives up her own happiness in order to secure the comfort of her relatives, a piece of altruism not to be admired wholly; she is placed in charge of a strange family of children in an incomprehensible manner. Over these she seems to exert little influence. After they have grown up the

misbehavior of one youth brings on the discovery of a painful family secret; an indirect result of this is the reunion of the heroine to her lost lover. The eccentricities of a large number of the persons in the story verge on insanity. Admirable as the heroine's motives are, it is hard to make out what effect her sacrifice has on the tangle of other people's wrong doing or for what reason her feelings and those of the reader are harrowed.

We gather from John Cowper Powys's "Wood and Stone" (G. Arnold Shaw, New York) that there is an evil spell in sandstone, at all events in the sandstone of an English hill once the scene of heathen rites. This spell overhaunts the various depraved or feeble minded people who figure in his book; it may account also for the author's remarkable prolixity, for his endless hairsplitting casuistry and his platitudinous vocabulary. He can write well and describe vividly when he forgets himself, as he does several times in his 726 pages, rousing momentary hopes that he has a story to tell or a character to draw, but these lapses are rare. He has discovered that a weak creature can be roused to energy when it finds that still weaker creature depends on it. To ascribe the book to the influence of Thomas Hardy's Wessex tales, as the author invites us to do, is unfair, for Mr. Hardy would have anticipated no such consequence; it is more likely that Mr. Powys has read too much of Mr. Hardy's verse.

## TWO NOTED WEDDINGS.

There is as little as possible about the woman whose biography he professes to write in Charles E. Pearce's "The Jolly Duchess" (Brentano's), and that drawn chiefly from admittedly untrustworthy narratives instead of such sources as could be found. The life about which Mr. Pearce has woven his book is that of Harriet Mellon, the actress, who well on in life married Coutts, the richest banker in England, and after his death, the Duke of St. Albans. About her he finds little to say beyond the well known facts that she was an Irish girl, who after wandering about with strolling players secured an engagement at Drury Lane and remained there for many years, no more of his life. There must be anecdotes too that the pupils and colleagues of his teaching years could tell of the spirit of fun that breaks out in so much of his verse. It is the priest, however, above all, that the author reveres and the singer of sacred songs, which she analyzes and quotes abundantly in this memorial volume.

When she was about 40 she was married to Thomas Coutts, the banker, who was 86, within a few days after his first wife's death. There was some mystery and a good deal of scandal about the marriage, and the author devotes a good deal of space to it. After the marriage Mrs. Coutts spent a lot of money in display and entertainments, which she kept up after her husband's death. He died at 90 and left her a large part of his fortune and of his interest in the bank. Even the scandal-mongers, from whom Mr. Pearce chooses to draw, could find nothing against her good name and had to content themselves with ridiculing her ostentation and vilifying her for mercenary motives. She was 50 when she married for the second time, choosing, for a title and social position, the Duke of St. Albans.

EDITH BARNARD DELANO  
AUTHOR OF "EAGS"  
(APPLETON)G. H. PUTNAM AUTHOR  
OF "MEMORIES OF A  
PUBLISHER"  
(PUTNAM)MARIE VAN VORST  
AUTHOR OF "WAR LETTERS  
OF AN AMERICAN WOMAN"  
(LANE)

who was much younger than she was and married for money. They lived in perfect harmony for ten years, when she died, and, having provided liberally for him, left the bulk of the Coutts money to Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts. This act kept the name of Harriet Mellon fresh throughout Queen Victoria's reign, for whenever Miss Burdett-Coutts and her benefactions were mentioned the newspapers were sure to recall the bequest of the Duchess of St. Albans. This Mr. Pearce dismisses in a single sentence. There was here, probably, much to be learned from the life of the Duchess, but Mr. Pearce has not chosen to write, preferring to collate scraps from the libellous theatrical periodicals of the time. The fragmentary picture of society he gives is the traditional picture of the Regency and George IV's reign; it rests, save for a small portion of the court and of society, on pretty untrustworthy evidence. Those who are unwilling to accept the picture of Mrs. Coutts as a ridiculous caricature will have to seek elsewhere for the means of judging her character or forming an opinion about her character. One fact is impressed on the readers of this book, namely, the incredibly low character of a portion of the London press in those days and its toleration by the public.

## FATHER TABB.

The title indicates the limitations of M. S. Pine's "John Bannister Tabb, the Priest-Poet" (Georgetown Visitation Convent, Washington). It is the religious side of Father Tabb's talent that the author appreciates, and, justly, as she does the religious side of his life. Ordinary mortals, who recognize his genial humor, would like to know something more of his adventures during the war and of the spirit that kept him an "unredeemed rebel" to the end of his life. There must be anecdotes too that the pupils and colleagues of his teaching years could tell of the spirit of fun that breaks out in so much of his verse. It is the priest, however, above all, that the author reveres and the singer of sacred songs, which she analyzes and quotes abundantly in this memorial volume.

## TOUCHING ON THE WAR.

What value the "War Pictures" (E. P. Dutton and Company), by Ian Malcolm, M. P., possess arises from the fact that the author has succeeded in limiting himself to what he actually saw and to impressions formed at the moment. He busied himself with organizing the Red Cross work, in the course of which he visited the front and was able to see something of the conditions in France in the early months of the war and made a visit to Italy. The polemical character of William Beard Hale's "American Rights and British Pretensions on the Sea" (Robert M. McBride and Company, New York) is undisguised. The pamphlet is an arraignment of the British proceedings in the past and in the present war. While the argument must be taken with caution, the lists of vessels detained and the documents republished are useful.

A fair and clear description of the

"Government and Politics of the German Empire," by Fritz-Konrad Krueger (World Book Company, Yonkers), may serve to remove many misconceptions from readers who are interested in the war. The book is quite elementary in character, which is a merit at present, and is written as though the war did not exist. It describes the mechanism of the empire and its history, especially that of the States composing it. By "politics" the author seems to understand the action of political parties within the empire. One chapter which might be open to criticism is the one on foreign policy, and that states the facts with remarkable impartiality. The author has written a useful text book.

Two more French studies on the war come in English translation from Armand Colin, Paris; a review of the historical facts by Prof. Charles Ségur, "1815-1915," and an analysis of the German mental attitude, "Germany above all," by Prof. E. Durkheim.

## FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The pick of the basket has already been taken out by Frances Jenkins Osgood in her selection for two little volumes, yet in "More Tales from the Arabian Nights" (Henry Holt and Company) she demonstrates how rich is the store she draws from. None of the tales made familiar in the nursery will be found here, no Aladdin or Sindbad, but stories that are perhaps somewhat more mature, such as that of Prince Camaralzaman and the Princess Badoura and that of the Fairy Periandros, find a place in it. The colored pictures by Willy Pogany are quaint and appropriate. The volume is interesting in itself and would be desired especially by those who already have the other two volumes.

The animal stories that Valery Caricak has illustrated in "Still More Russian Picture Tales" (B. H. Blackwell, Oxford; Longmans, Green and Company) are of the animal kind that children like, which reached their perfection in the Joel Chandler Harris chronicles of Brer Rabbit. The simplified translations by Neville Forbes are from genuine Russian folktales, which, entertaining though they are, are rendered much more effectively in the artist's capital drawings.

Another dramatization of "Alice in Wonderland" has been essayed by Alice Geisenberg (A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago) with considerable success. Directions as to costumes, scenery and acting are interspersed, but might be improved perhaps by omitting the preliminary and concluding conversations between Alice

and Lewis Carroll. With the illustrations and the red borders it makes an attractive book.

## VARIED INTERESTS.

A timely publication now that attention is centered on Europe is that of "An Historical Atlas of Modern Europe from 1789 to 1914" by C. Grant Robertson and J. G. Bartholomew (Humphrey Milford; Oxford University Press), a remarkably low priced book. The thirty-six plates are on a scale large enough to make the history of the nineteenth century intelligible, helped out as they are by the carefully prepared text. In Great Britain the atlas is sold for the equivalent of a dollar, which brings it within the reach of every newspaper reader. The maps, apart from their educational value, explain the European problems that led to the war and show many of the difficulties that will have to be arranged in the settlement.

The greater part of the Hon. Isaac Stephenson's "Recollections of a Long Life" (privately printed, Chicago) is taken up with the entertaining story of his early days, his lumbering experiences in Maine and Wisconsin, his business ventures and the description of the pioneer days of what are now great Wisconsin cities. At the end he relates his adventures in politics; these have left him with a poor opinion of the faith of politicians. He gives in great detail the story of his dealings with Senator La Follette, which is far from complimentary to that gentleman and to the Progressive party in Wisconsin.

In writing "An Introduction to the Study of Variable Stars" (Houghton Mifflin Company), Dr. Caroline E. Furness, director of the Vassar College observatory and successor of Maria Mitchell, has the great merit of assuming little or no knowledge of the subject on the part of her reader.

MARIE VAN VORST'S WAR  
WORK AND HER LETTERS

Miss Marie Van Vorst, the American novelist who makes her home in Paris, is at present writing in this country and delivering lectures quite new undertakings for her for the benefit of the American Ambulance in France. Miss Van Vorst feels that the people of the United States, especially in the West, are not thoroughly familiar with this wonderful institution created by their generosity for the soldiers of France, which is today maintaining the lives of 600,000 people at a time. All the funds, with some slight exceptions, have been raised in America, chiefly by Mrs. Robert Bacon, wife of the former Ambassador to France, and Mrs. H. H. Rogers, who are now in France and in the Red Cross, which will shortly appear under the title of "War Letters of an American Woman."

In England she is said to be more understood and better loved than in her own country as a writer of novels. By her humanness, by the sincerity of her character, drawing as well as by her individual style she has made herself extremely popular with the English reading public. Yet there is no writer who is more thoroughly American than Miss Van Vorst. In her treatment of the types of her own country she is a sincere artist. People who are ardent admirers of Edith Wharton are likely not to be of Marie Van Vorst. One is a realist, in whose veins the red blood runs and whose lovers love in reality either rightly or wrongly.

One charming thing in "The War Letters of an American Woman" is the story told in different letters and piecemeal and hit by bit of the life of one of France's most brilliant young soldiers, Comte Henri Daxville, to whom she has dedicated the book. Those who see this book advertised and think it is just another war book will find it quite another thing. It is a collection of life pictures drawn in one of the most vivid moments of the world's history.

Besides revealing herself, Miss Van Vorst has revealed other people in the character of her different friends. "The War Letters of an American Woman" closes with a farewell address of Comte Daxville to his cavalry when he left them to go into the trenches as a foot soldier, and where he fell. It follows:

Comrades: I have gathered you to this morning to say good-bye. I am not going to speak to you of the present, because it is a heart-rending moment at which my heart breaks. I am not going to speak to you of the future, because the future belongs to God alone.

But I have a right, indeed it is my duty, to have recalled to you that while we have met together and which we have lived together.

Officers and non-commissioned officers, brigadiers and troopers, all my beloved comrades, every man of you who has come under my flag, I have but one single word—a single order—duty.

It is to more completely accomplish my own duty that to-day I have the courage to part from you. And you, all of you, with a unanimous spirit, with a magnificent generosity in your terrible youth, you have responded to my call and have placed your heart in my hands.

It is for this I want to thank you. This moment contains happiness that no other human life can ever claim.

Now go back to your duty with courage and without sadness, recalling to yourself have often felt together—to know that as one man is indispensable and with all the changes that befall, three things alone shall remain: the intelligence which comprehends the will that believes, and above everything else the sentiment by which we know how to love.

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MARIE VAN VORST  
AUTHOR OF "WAR LETTERS  
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ers and therefore endeavoring to explain everything to them. She not only tells them what is now known about this interesting branch of astronomical work, with the history of what has been done since variable stars were first examined scientifically, but she describes the instruments and processes used in observation, the results obtained, the deductions drawn from them, and endeavors to make the technical portions intelligible to the non-scientific reader. In consequence her book is a fascinating introduction to astronomical study, while it is in no sense a "popular" scientific book. It will be a spur to the many amateurs who use their telescopes in the night.

A pleasant guide to the attractive coast and country extending from Boston to Newburyport, the Massachusetts North Shore, has been prepared by Agnes Edwards in "The Romantic Shore" (The Salem Press Company, Salem, Mass.). She is helped out by the familiar poems which New England poets have written about the places she describes. Her research is not very deep, the information approaching that which the automobile traveler might gather, so that persons familiar with that bit of the country will be struck as much by what she notes down. The flight of the people for the night to the beach, for instance, might have been mentioned with the account of the Beverly and Manchester summer abodes, and Senator Lodge and the Maells gardens with Nahant. The little book does well enough, however, as an enthusiastic guide to a pleasing and easily accessible summer land.

A useful little handbook for visitors to Boston's Museum of Fine Arts is the "Greek Gods and Heroes," prepared by Arthur Fairbanks (Houghton Mifflin Company). This gives not only the myths and the literary allusions, but explains the manner in which each figure appears in art, particularly in the sculpture, casts and cameos contained in the museum. The little book is illustrated very fully and is apparently designed chiefly for school

classes that may inspect the collections. In "The Flower Art of Japan" (John Lane Company) Mary Averill apparently has reached the point of proficiency which raises her above her teachers or, at all events, enables her to decide which one should be followed, even though Japanese taste does not concur. She seems determined also to introduce to the Western barbarians, with the canons of Japanese taste in arranging flowers, the ritual and polite ceremonies with which the Orientals perform the task. The book is illustrated with many pictures which will please even persons less highly keyed up to aesthetic refinements than the author is.

Gratitude must be felt to Peter H. Goldsmith by all who are eager to enter upon South American enterprises for compiling "A Brief Bibliography of Books in English, Spanish and Portuguese" relating to the Latin American countries (Macmillan), not so much for his list of books as for his frank comments on the character of the books. No one who has written about these countries, particularly the more recent ones in English, are unsatisfactory in many respects. Mr. Goldsmith tells briefly what will be found in each and whether the author's statements are to be trusted or not. His little book will save business men and students a lot of trouble.

The "Comparative Free Government" by Prof. Jesse Macy and Prof. John W. Gannaway of Grinnell College, Iowa (Macmillan), is in the main an account of the Government of the United States and of the individual States, to which the books are devoted. A similar account of the working of the English Government takes up 160 pages, France, Germany and Switzerland together have to put up with 95 pages, while for the rest of Europe and South America 50 pages suffice. The result is an excellent manual of political science designed for use in American colleges.

From Paul Elder and Company, San Francisco, comes "The Peace Calendar and Diary, 1916," compiled by Dr. John J. Mulowney, containing leaflets for each day in the year with blank spaces for notes. Each leaflet has on it a quotation from some author denouncing war or praising peace, and an ingenious mechanical contrivance keeps that quotation before the eyes of the user of the calendar till that particular day is done.

OTHER BOOKS.

The lectures delivered at Brown University by Prof. F. W. Taussig of Harvard on "Inventors and Money-Makers" (Macmillan) must have entertained his hearers even if they added nothing to the sum of human knowledge. He tried to apply the terms of biology, psychology and the pragmatic school to some aspects of economic science, perhaps not very seriously. Invention he ascribes rather tentatively to the "instinct of contrivance" and the greed for money to the "instinct of collection" and the desire for instincts and analogies with the ways of lesser animals.

The advantage the poor boy has in the battle of life over the rich boy is shown by Edward Bok in "Why I Believe in Poverty" (Houghton Mifflin Company). In a brief and interesting narrative of personal experience the testimony to his belief in "Efficient Living" given by Edward Earle Purinton (Robert M. McBride and Company, New York) would carry more weight if the author did not regard to it his individual convictions joining health, diet, psychology and other matters, even supplying free medical advice. "The Shibboleth of Efficiency" is made to cover a multitude of older fallacies nowadays and "promoter" has advanced from a rather opprobrious designation to high rank in economic terminology. There are signs of a reaction from the accretions to the efficiency theory, and this book may help in bringing it about.

Old-fashioned parents may feel some astonishment in reading Maryott Holt Dey's short story "Making a Man of

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